

22nd March 2018



Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources
and Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Via Email: sdnraide@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL 2018

We refer to the Vegetation Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 which the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee has called for submissions.

To deliver a more sustainable vegetation management framework for Queensland there must be both legal and economic foundations securely set in place. The sustainable economic development of Queensland must benefit all landholders, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, through sensible measures designed to support good stewardship of the land, provide local employment outcomes and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Simply put, land holders should be paid for protecting the trees (vegetation) and doing the right thing locally. This will provide an income, support investment in regional communities and eliminate unnecessary land clearing thereby reducing GHG emissions.

The establishment of the \$500m Land Restoration Fund is an opportunity to invest in environmental, social and cultural values of land holders through a Queensland scheme. The first steps towards a Queensland carbon scheme should also be signalled as a light on the hill now.

The raising of funds largely through a government secured green bond scheme will provide the financial resources to enable investment in Queensland. Ensuring that landholders who are good stewards and making positive contributions locally are the priority of this investment will be a challenge for the administration of this scheme.

It is welcomed that the Bill will not include a reverse onus of proof provision as this was ideologically flawed. However, if

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illegal land clearing does take place which is proven to be environmentally damaging then the full weight of the law should be applied with vigour.

The amendments in the *Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018*, as they are currently framed, will protect Queensland's remnant and high-value regrowth vegetation. However, it does not provide the necessary economic basis for income generation which enables long-term environmental, social and cultural outcomes. Without this economic basis it is unlikely to win bipartisan political support and will not provide for the long-term outcomes desired as the legislation may be repealed at the next available opportunity.

It is noted that the multi-million dollar carbon farming industry is not acknowledged and no legislative measures to synchronise with the Commonwealth's [*Carbon Credits \(Carbon Farming Initiative\) Act 2011*](#) are being proposed in the Minister's first reading speech and Bill. This is a lost opportunity for Queensland and a carefully considered strategic approach is required to enable State and Commonwealth legislative approaches to be complementary.

The practical realities of landholders must also be a keen focus of attention. It has been reported that landholders in the Paroo Shire, South-West Queensland, have recently raised concerns around the establishment of carbon farms that produce income for absentee landlord(s), produce carbon credits that are bought through the Australian Government's Emission Reduction Fund based in Canberra but provide no local jobs. The properties in question may well become infected with weeds and feral animals as no one is caring for the land.

Whereas, carbon farming projects should be a source of income and pride in the local community. The good stewardship of the land is an endeavour people and communities should be proud of and encourage younger generations to continue caring for the land.

I look forward to the proposed legislation being: a benefit to all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Queenslanders first and foremost; greater investment in Queensland; and a clear reduction in GHG emissions.

Yours sincerely,



Rowan Foley
General Manager